

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15 are pending, with claim 1 having been amended above so as to include the limitations of claim 2, and claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16 having been canceled above.

Claims 1 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fujii (JP 2003 - 029142A). Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested in view of claim 1 having been amended above. In Fujii (as is only somewhat apparent from the English Abstract) the purpose of the invention is clear from the following description (translated from Japanese) "in view of the aforementioned recognized problems with the prior art endoscope objective lens system, the purpose of the present invention is to provide an endoscope objective lens comprising three lenses having negative, positive, and positive refractive powers that ensures a back focus required for focusing, has a small effective diameter, and has excellent aberrations (mainly spherical aberration and field curvature). " Therefore, the purpose of Fujii's invention is quite different from (i.e., opposite) the purpose of the present invention. In the present invention, the back focus is made to be zero, whereas in Fujii the back focus is made to be sufficiently long to allow for focusing to be accomplished. As amended, claim 1 now includes the limitation previously contained in dependent claim 2, and claim 2 has been canceled. The added limitation is as follows:

"the image-side surface of the third lens element makes contact with an end surface of an optical fiber bundle, a surface of an image detector, or a cover glass for an image detector;"

Although claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), as noted above, such rejection was clearly improper since there is no embodiment disclosed in Fujii where the image-side surface of the third lens element makes contact with an end surface of an optical fiber bundle, a surface of an image detector, or a cover glass for an image detector (as was originally claimed in claim 2, but is now claimed in amended claim 1). Thus, amended claim 1 is not anticipated by Fujii.

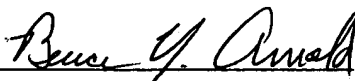
Furthermore, since claim 3 is a dependent claim that depends from claim 1, claim 3 is no longer anticipated by Fujii. Moreover, despite Fig. 7 of the present application being admitted prior art that otherwise might suggest to one of ordinary skill in the art to design an image-side surface of a third lens element so as to be in contact with an end surface of an optical fiber bundle, a surface of an image detector, or a cover glass for an image detector, one of ordinary skill in the art would **not** find it obvious to modify Fujii so as to be similar to Fig. 7 of the present application, since this would **totally negate** the stated purpose of Fujii, as discussed above.

Claims 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujii. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested in view of the above amendment to claim 1. As claims 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15 are dependent claims that depend (directly or indirectly) from claim 1, claims 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15 should be allowable at least for the reasons (as discussed above) that claim 1 should now be allowable over the prior art of record.

Having amended claim 1 so as to patentably distinguish over the prior art of record, having canceled claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16, and having pointed out that claims 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15 are dependent claims that depend (directly or indirectly) from claim 1, it is respectfully requested that, unless more pertinent prior art is found, an early Notice of Allowability be provided.

Respectfully submitted,

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